

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A method of playing a wagering game comprising:
 - a player placing a wager in a gaming machine,
 - 5 the gaming machine having more than one symbol display system comprising a first symbol display area and at least a second symbol display area;
 - the first symbol display area and the at least a second display area displaying a plurality of symbols that are used to determine winning events;
 - the first display area providing at least one first symbol;
 - 10 automatically providing that at least one first symbol to the at least second display area;
 - independently and randomly completing symbol display for each of the first display area and the at least second display area; and
 - 15 determining if winning events are present in the first display area and the at least second display area.
2. The method of playing a wagering game according to claim 1 wherein the player has the option of placing wagers on the at least second display area or not placing a wager on the at least second display area.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1 wherein when a player selects a total amount to be wagered in a round of games, the wagers are distributed automatically among the first display area and the at least one second display area.
- 25 4. The method of claim 3 wherein when the total amount wagered is not evenly divisible by a total number of second display areas wagered upon, wagers are automatically distributed among display areas, with a maximum difference in wagers or different display area allowed.
- 30 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the maximum difference is one minimum wagering unit.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the first display area is required to have a wager placed thereon that is no smaller than any wager placed on any other display area.
- 5 7. A video gaming apparatus comprising a housing, processor, and video display, the gaming apparatus having hardware and software enabling practice of the method of claim 1.
- 10 8. A video gaming apparatus comprising a housing, processor, and video display, the gaming apparatus having hardware and software enabling practice of the method of claim 2.
- 15 9. A video gaming apparatus comprising a housing, processor, and video display, the gaming apparatus having hardware and software enabling practice of the method of claim 3.
- 20 10. A video gaming apparatus comprising a housing, processor, and video display, the gaming apparatus having hardware and software enabling practice of the method of claim 4.
11. A video gaming apparatus comprising a housing, processor, and video display, the gaming apparatus having hardware and software enabling practice of the method of claim 5.
- 25 12. A video gaming apparatus comprising a housing, processor, and video display, the gaming apparatus having hardware and software enabling practice of the method of claim 6.
13. The method of claim 1 wherein a player selects a bonus event related to symbols or events that may occur in any symbol display area and the appearance of predetermined events in any of the symbol display areas cause a bonus event to occur in which the

selected bonus event provides a bonus when the selected bonus event has a predetermined relationship to specific predetermined events.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein the selected bonus event comprises a generic

5 category and the player or machine then makes a first selection of a species from within the generic category as an element of play in a bonus game.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein after first selection of a species by the player, the machine makes a random second selection from among species.

10

16. The method of claim 15 wherein predetermined relationships between the first selection and the second selection determine a bonus amount to be paid to the player.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein there are more than one bonus awards available
15 depending upon different predetermined relationships.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the genus comprises months and the species comprise dates.

20 19. The method of claim 1 wherein a player selects a symbol prior to play of an underlying game that establishes an element of bonus play in the event that a player is awarded a bonus play in the play of the underlying game.

25 20. The method of claim 20 wherein the bonus play includes random selection of species within a genus that is part of the symbol selected by the player.